

REMARKS

Claims 3-4 and 7-10 were examined in the Final Office Action mailed July 10, 2006. Claims 7-10 stand allowed.

The sole remaining rejection is that of claims 3-4 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement.

In order to address the concern expressed in the July 10, 2006 Office Action, and to do so in a manner which does not require further search, the Applicants are requesting entry of amendments which achieve the same goal of those presented in Applicants' April 20, 2006 response, but do so with language more directly linked to the original Specification.

Specifically, the Applicants seek to replace the previously-added phrase "wherein no fiber within said optical fiber bundle produces multiple images of the light introduced at the first end," with the recitation that the coupling-out optical system couples out the light emerging from "each fiber of the optical fiber bundle at a second end of said optical fiber bundle, the light emerging from the fibers retaining an inhomogeneous intensity distribution of light corresponding to the inhomogeneous distribution created upon entry of the light into the fibers at the first end of the optical fiber bundle." Support for these amendments can be found at original specification page 9, lines 7-18, describing the incidence of light at the first end of the fiber bundle 4, the use of fiber bundle 4 as an optical waveguide (*i.e.*, propagating light, with no mention of other light alterations such as homogenization, which is performed elsewhere (homogenizing optical system 6, discussed in the next paragraph of the original specification)), and the

retaining at the fiber bundle outlet (at coupling-out optical system 5), the inhomogeneous light distribution created when the incident light is separated at the fiber bundle inlet for propagation through the fibers.

As amended, claims 3-4 would continue to be distinguished over the Tsuji reference (U.S. Patent No. 6,285,855) in the same manner as the previous amendments (*i.e.*, distinguished on a grounds that was the basis of the prior search, obviating the need for a new search). As noted at pages 7-9 of the April 20, 2006 response, the present optical fiber bundle solely *propagates* light from one end of the bundle to the other, with an inhomogeneous light distribution appearing at the bundle outlet due to the presence of the multitude of individual light-carrying fibers. For the reasons discussed in greater detail in the April 20, 2006 response, Tsuji teaches a fundamentally different approach, using a single *reflection-generating* optical pipe to generate multiple images of a single light source, with the result that Tsuji performs at least a partial homogenization of the incoming light source into the more evenly-distributed light pattern visible at magnification unit 5. Thus, Tsuji would continue to fail to disclose or suggest the invention recited amended claims 3-4.

Because entry of the foregoing amendments to claims 3-4 would place these claims into condition for allowance without necessitating a new search, entry of these amendments and withdrawal of the pending § 112, first paragraph, rejection is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

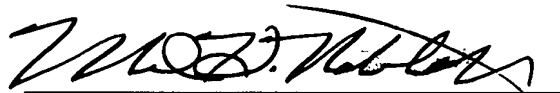
The Applicants respectfully submit that upon entry of the requested amendments, claims 3-4 would be in condition for allowance. Entry of these amendments, and issuance of a Notice of Allowance for claims 3-4 and 7-10 is respectfully requested.

If there are any questions regarding this amendment or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

If necessary to effect a timely response, this paper should be considered as a petition for an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response, and please charge any deficiency in fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 05-1323 (Docket #011270.49970D1).

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Respectfully submitted,



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